

Ave Maria Sun

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SUMMER 2021

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"The community's residential and commercial developments, including new professional office suites and dining and retail options, are driving the record-breaking growth in 2021." — **Cee Cee Marinelli**, *director of development for Ave Maria*



Ave Maria celebrates SUMMER of NEW

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

REFRESHINGLY, IT'S THE "SUMMER OF NEW" in Ave Maria. The town is celebrating all the new homes, stores, restaurants, amenities and activities that are popping up in the fast-growing town. And, of course, these benefit all the new residents who are calling Ave Maria home. There were more than 350 new home sales through the end of June.

"The various housing types, recreational activities and amenities, exceptional educational options and hometown lifestyle continue to attract new home buyers to the master-planned community," said Cee Cee Marinelli, director of development for Ave Maria.

SEE SUMMER, A4 ►



Residents celebrate Water Safety Day, Splash into Summer and Graduation Glow Party.



Anthem Parkway Expansion will run circles around downtown

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

One of the last major road construction projects in Ave Maria will increase access along the eastern edge of town, relieve traffic downtown and pave the way for growth in the north.

Anthem Parkway, which currently runs from Ave Maria Boulevard near the Park of Commerce and ends just past the Maple Ridge amenity center, is being expanded.

Another segment that is one-and-a-half miles long is being added, making Anthem Parkway a little more than three miles altogether. It will end near North Park.

"The town center gets rather congested when the university is in session and we have a lot of visitors in season," says David Genson, president of development for Barron Collier Companies, developer of Ave Maria. "This will be a quick and efficient bypass for those residents on the north side of town. Likewise, for residents who live in Maple Ridge on the south side, they can quickly get into town by jumping on Anthem and running up to Pope John Paul II Boulevard."

Mr. Genson said new construction in this area, including Avalon Park and another phase of Maple Ridge, necessitated the road expansion at this time.

"We haven't had development activity in the northern edges of Ave until recently."

He said he expects to see not only these new homes in the area but the opening of Ave

SEE ANTHEM, A4 ►

"We haven't had development activity in the northern edges of Ave until recently."

— **David Genson**, *president of development for Barron Collier Companies, developer of Ave Maria*

Singing out

Songwriters Marlo and Mark perform locally but dream nationally. **A8 ►**



Meet a townmaker

Donna Marquez. **A9 ►**



Sports

Ave Maria University athletics department continues to blossom. **A16 ►**



Ave Maria Sun

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Ave Maria development sees commercial real estate resurgence

Activity in the commercial real estate market has continued to grow within Ave Maria. Demand for office and retail space is booming along with the master-planned community's record-breaking new home sales. New commercial additions to the town include Loyola Professional Suites and several new businesses in the Ave Maria Town Center.

The new Loyola Professional Suites will open in August 2021 and include 13 executive suites ranging from 120 square feet to 250 square feet. With more people moving to Ave Maria and working remotely this past year, the demand for a workspace outside the home has only increased. Located at 5072 Annunciation Circle, 2nd floor, the individual professional office suites are over 85% leased by various types of businesses including: a marketing firm, an attorney, logistics and an IT company. Amenities include a lobby, two conference rooms, open spaces, lounge seating, and a kitchen area with coffee service.

"The environment is pleasing, yet vibrant with mid-century inspired furniture, urban accents with warm woods, charcoal coated fixtures and the interior offices and rooms with glass windows and doors bring light into the space," Heather Grey, Principal with G2 Studios and designer of the new Loyola Suites, said. The modern industrial aesthetic with high ceilings, wood floors, and plenty of natural light provides a perfect setting for holding meetings and conducting business.

The Ave Maria Town Center is seeing an influx of new locally owned businesses opening their doors and expanding their services. Several new retailers chose Ave Maria for their



COURTESY IMAGE

An artist's rendering of the Loyola Professional Suites interior.

business as the Southwest Florida market is more and more sought after. The open-air walkable Town Center spans over 100,000 square feet and serves as the central hub of the community with over 30 merchants including restaurants, shops, and services.

Maxwell Grace carries unique home décor, gift items, seasonal merchandise, pet accessories, and custom silk floral arrangements. When Bridget Corcoran, Ave Maria resident, opened the store in December one of her goals she had in mind was to partner with smaller companies and support small stores. Maxwell Grace is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located at 5064 Annunciation Circle, Suite 107. It is closed Sundays and Mondays. For more information, please visit www.shopmaxwellgrace.com or call 716-462-9147.

Hoja De Menta, a women's boutique, features clothing, handmade jewelry, accessories, and home décor. Owner and fashion stylist, Reina Del Mar Torres, hand selects all the piec-

es in her retail store and provides styling consultations. Ms. Torres' second new business, Ave Maria Bike Rental, offers bicycle rentals in front of her boutique for adults and children to explore the community. Located at 5052 Pope John Paul II Blvd., Suite 112, the hours of operation are Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is closed Mondays. For more information, please visit www.hojadementa.shop or call 787-412-9338.

Another new retailer, So Baling Sportswear, offers sports equipment, apparel, and fitness accessories. Owners Christina Zibell and Adrien Harris, Ave Maria residents, saw a need for a local sporting goods store

after starting Ave Maria Youth Sports. Located at 5064 Annunciation Circle, Suite 108, So Baling Sportswear is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please visit www.soballing.com or call 238-658-5856.

Ave Nails offers a variety of services including manicures, pedicures, gel polishes, dip acrylics, waxing, lash lift and tint, and more. Located at 5052 Pope John Paul II Blvd., Suite 110, the nail salon is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday through Saturday. Ave Nails is family owned by Ave Maria residents, Danny Dang and Marie Nguyen, who bring over 20 years of experience working in nail salons. For more information, please visit Ave Nails on Facebook @avenails or call 239-658-5745.

For more information regarding commercial leasing with Ave Maria Development, please contact Cee Cee Marinelli at cmarinelli@barroncollier.com or at 239-262-2600. 🌟

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SUMMER

From page 1

“The community’s residential and commercial developments, including new professional office suites and dining and retail options, are driving the record-breaking growth in 2021.”

Where to Live

CC Homes announced that it is expanding by almost ninety acres and 260 homes in its Maple Ridge single family home community. CC Homes offers 18 different floor plans ranging 1,133 to 4,000 square feet under air.

The next phase of Avalon Park by Pulte opened for sales in April and features 11 different floors plans of one- and two-story homes. Models homes are being built to showcase the popular Roseland, Whitestone and Mystique styles.

Lennar opened its Welcome Home Center and three single family homes this spring and plans to open six models this fall showcasing its Veranda two-story and Terrace four-story homes.

Residents at Del Webb Naples can now also enjoy the newly opened, 14,000-square-foot Grand Hall clubhouse with expanded amenities and activities.

Other New Buildings

The town is benefitting from the new Immokalee Fire Control District Ave Maria Public Safety Complex. The site will serve as an emergency operations center and house the fire department, county sheriff’s office staff and EMS. The main 22,000-square-foot building has a board room, complete with dais, that community organizations can use.

Barron Collier Companies is also building additional executive suites to support local entrepreneurs who want to work outside of but close to their home.

And the Ave Maria Master Association moved this spring into a much larger space with meeting and event rooms for residents to use.

Things to Do

Lennar opened the golf course at its National Golf & Country Club in January and has been drawing players from throughout south Florida. Golfers are commenting on the par 5 16th hole, which is nicknamed “The Beast” because it is 701 yards from the back tees.

Panther Run Golf Club in the Del Webb Naples’ master planned community is undergoing its first renovation since opening in 2007 and will come back as an even better place to play this fall. The entire course will be re-seeded, with Bimini replacing Celebration on the fairways, and refreshed TifEagle on the greens, which will be re-contoured. Bunkers will get new liners and new sand, and drainage will be improved.

Ave Maria Sports Camp for children ages 9-14 will run the weeks of July 19 and 26 from 9 to 11 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Parks and Recreation Manager John Croce will get kids moving as they learn about and play kickball, basketball, dodgeball, wiffle ball and volleyball. The camp culminates with a day at the Water Park with games and ice cream.



The 2021 Memorial Day Parade.



Fun in the sun is to be had all summer long.

Mr. Croce hopes to encourage more residents to use the disc golf course by having a presentation by a professional disc golf team from Gainesville later this summer.

Adults can get involved by joining one of Ave Maria’s many sports groups or activities clubs.

Shopping and Dining

Business owners are keeping up with demand by opening new retail stores and restaurants in Ave Maria.

Hoja de Menta sells women’s clothing. Ave



Celebrating International Yoga Day.

Maria Bike Rental, outside the store, helps people get fit while exploring the town.

Ave Nails offers manicures, pedicures, gels, waxing, and lash lift and tint.

So Balling Sportswear stocks clothing, accessories and equipment for just about every sport.

Maxwell Grace carries home decor, seasonal merchandise, gift items, and custom silk floral arrangements.

The most recent restaurants to open added international flair to the cuisine options. Teriyaki Madness is a fast-casual Asian restaurant concept that features made-to-order dishes such as chicken teriyaki, yakisoba noodles with meat or tofu, and chicken katsu. Loza-

no’s, which has been an Immokalee mainstay for 25 years, serves homestyle Mexican food.

About Ave Maria

Ave Maria has been named 2015-2020 Community of the Year, the Top Selling Single-Family Home Community in Southwest Florida, a Top 40 Master Planned Community in the United States and its active adult community, Del Webb Naples, has been named a Top 20 Places to Retire.

At its build out, the town will include up to 11,000 residences, and 1.8 million square feet of retail, office, and business park uses in its 4,000 acres. 🌻

ANTHEM

From page 1

Maria Elementary School by August of 2023.

“All of those things combined have really expedited the completion of what I’m calling the north side of Anthem Parkway.”

Mr. Genson estimates that the southern part of the expansion, up to Pope John Paul II Boulevard, should be completed during the

“It’s always good when infrastructure is in place for future growth. As the developer, we see fit to put this in place, anticipating that growth is coming.”

— **David Genson**, *president of development for Barron Collier Companies, developer of Ave Maria*

fourth quarter of 2021. Construction on the rest of the expansion should start after that and be completed during the second quarter of 2022.

The new two-lane road will be expandable to four lanes when it’s warranted, he said.

Part of the road project includes creating six roundabouts, which Mr. Genson said are

“an efficient way to manage traffic flow at intersections.”

The west side of Anthem Parkway will feature a 12-foot wide asphalt shared-use path for pedestrians, bicyclists and people driving golf carts. Curbs will help keep vehicles on the pavement and protect nearby grassy areas.

With such strong home sales in Ave Maria, Mr. Genson said this expansion is timely.

“It’s always good when infrastructure is in place for future growth. As the developer, we see fit to put this in place, anticipating that growth is coming.” 🌻

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Phase two of Avalon Park opens for sales

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Pulte unveiled 11 new floors plans when it opened sales in April for phase two of its Avalon Park community in Ave Maria.

Phase one is completely sold and built, but the new section has 251 lots, almost all offering scenic water views.

The single-family homes within walking distance of downtown Ave Maria have quickly become popular.

“With the way the market is going, we are definitely exceeding our expectations,” said Shirley Jerezano, general sales manager for Pulte’s Southwest Florida market.

The 1- and 2-story home designs have well-appointed kitchens, open living spaces, and spacious owner’s suites.

Ms. Jerezano said the Distinctive Series is ideal for the first-time home buyer or empty nester.

The Echelon Series, she said, often appeals to someone with a larger family who needs more space, including a second floor and lots of bedrooms. Three-car garages are available with some Echelon models.

“Both series offer personalization based on the lifestyle of the buyer,” she said.

Families are looking for flex rooms and open



COURTESY PHOTOS

Left: The gathering room in the Mystique model. Above: The lanai area of the Easley model.

space, she said, while empty nesters prefer a single story and a big kitchen for entertaining.

“Everybody wants to maximize their home space inside and outside, in case they get stuck at home again,” Ms. Jerezano said. “They want pools. They want to make sure their home provides everything from home school to working from home to vacationing at home. We offer many different ways to structure and design a home.”

Though the 11 models are new to Avalon Park, they have been used in other Pulte communities, including Manatee Cove in Naples, Sapphire

Point in Lakewood Ranch, and Hampton Lakes in Alva. The homebuilder’s Del Webb community in Ave Maria features the Mystique model.

One of the best sellers is the Roseland model, which can be configured to have six bedrooms and five bathrooms, with the master bedroom upstairs or downstairs.

Mystique is Avalon Park’s best single story seller, boasting a large, open kitchen with an island. Yorkshire has a flex room that works well for home schooling and a large walk-in pantry.

Whitestone is a two-story design with a large flex room at the front of the home and a multi-

use upstairs loft.

Buyers also have choices for the exterior of all 11 models, including coastal that features a lot of white, Florida Mediterranean that trends toward beige, and a new modern concept with blues and grays.

“We are very excited about the more contemporary look,” Ms. Jerezano said. “It is trendy and consumer-inspired. We asked our buyers what they were looking for.” The interiors are designed with less curvature and fewer stainless steel appliances.

Model homes for Roseland, Whitestone and Mystique are under construction and should open this fall.

Pulte sales representatives are busy working with customers from not only “up north” as is traditional but also Texas, Arizona and California.

“People are starting to venture from (the country’s) west coast to east coast,” Ms. Jerezano noted. “It used to be just New England and the midwest.”

She said people are attracted to Ave Maria for its small town feeling. And, she notes, that “the beauty of Avalon Park is you’re within walking distance of downtown Ave Maria.”

To learn more, visit the Avalon Park Sales Center 4972 Seton Street, Ave Maria. 🌟



COURTESY PHOTO

The Gulf model at Maple Ridge.

Maple Ridge adding 260 more lots

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

After record-breaking sales this year, CC Homes is expanding its Maple Ridge community in Ave Maria by almost ninety acres and adding 260 more lots.

“Maple Ridge continues to exceed our expectations with demand for affordable luxury homes

at an all-time high,” said Andy Miyares, chief operating officer. “Families want a piece of the Ave Maria pie. They are flocking to Ave, as the locals call it, for the town’s exceptional lifestyle offering relaxed charm, scenic nature views, and extra space at attainable prices.

“CC Homes has been a big beneficiary of Ave Maria’s appeal,” he continued, “thanks to our offering of well designed, quality, spacious brand-

new homes.”

The master-planned single-family home community consists of four neighborhoods. Coquina and Maple Ridge Reserve were completed prior to 2020.

Construction continues in Silverwood, an enclave of homes priced from the upper \$200,000s to low \$300,000s.

SEE MAPLE RIDGE, A7 ►

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Ave Maria Master Association relocates to expanded space

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

It seems like everyone’s on the move in Ave Maria, including the Master Association.

The new 5,577-square-foot location at 5080 Annunciation Circle Suite 101 not only houses association staff, it has rooms for community groups and activities.

“It was exciting but we’re still settling in,” said Lifestyle Director Carol DiFlorio of the May 3 relocation. “You know how it is when you move into a home. You open the boxes you need right away and then with the others say, ‘I’m going to get to that.’ We dealt with the external areas first because that’s where we greet our residents.”

The association’s previous location had several offices but only one community room. The new space has a small conference room, multipurpose room, library, card room, arts and crafts room, youth and teens room, small children’s room, work area with desks for residents to use, and break area with a dishwasher, mini-fridge, microwave and sink.

“We wanted to have somewhere that would be more of a community area with different offerings for our homeowners,” Ms. DiFlorio said. “This gives us more freedom.”

The youth and teens room has gaming stations, gaming-style chairs and televisions. Ms. DiFlorio said it’s a place where the community’s teens can “hang out.” She hopes they will also bring their computers and do their homework in the work area.

The small children’s room has a large glass panel with a view into the meeting and events room, which she said is helpful for parents.

“Sometimes, residents need to bring their child or have to leave if a child gets restless. Now they can put their kids in the room, turn on the TV and see into the room.” The space also has videos, movies, games, books and puzzles.

As amenities such as the parks, fitness center and water park fully re-open, Ms. DiFlorio said she expects some clubs to resume their activities and utilize the new space.

The crochet and knitting club expressed interest in meeting again. There used to be an active game group that met on Mondays and Thursdays. The Ave Maria Veterans Association is also very popular and continues to sell flags and flagpoles that residents can buy for the town’s veterans.

“People can continue to communicate with John Croce, the parks and recreation manager, or with me in lifestyles to revive or introduce

clubs and groups,” Ms. DiFlorio said.

Outdoor sports such as Little League, flag football, softball, soccer and basketball are taking place.

Many residents are also very involved with Ave Cares, which promotes philanthropy and volunteerism. The group held a successful drive for the Naples Humane Society this spring, raising \$164 in cash and donating \$1,725 in supplies. They also held a diaper and food drive for Mary and Mercy Center Immokalee Outreach Team, providing more than 200 bags of groceries and 5,000 diapers plus baby care items for Immokalee families.

Thanks to a recommendation from an Ave Maria resident, community members also sent letters of encouragement and supplies to a 16-year-old girl in Little Rock, Arkansas, who is undergoing treatment for a second brain tumor.

Summer Events

Of course, there are also lots of special events where residents can meet their neighbors.

On-Spot Dermatology’s mobile clinic will be in Ave Maria on July 9 and 31 as well as on Aug. 16.

The bloodmobile comes every two months, with the next appointments being taken for Aug. 31.

Super Science & Amazing Art offers a weekly camp the weeks of July 12, 19 and 26. Geared for ages 6-13, the camp meets from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in North Park and presents topics such as robotics and kitchen chemistry. On Fridays, parents are invited to see what their children created during the week.

Sports camp for ages 9-14 runs the weeks of July 19 and 26 from 9 to 11 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The water park celebrates the Dog Days of Summer from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 24. Residents can enjoy poolside activities and games, music, special pricing on hot dogs, and an appearance by Puddles, the mascot dog.

• Watch the website for details about a Wildlife Day in July and a Beach Day Out to Delnor-Wiggins State Park on Aug. 21. For more information head to www.avemaria.com/news-and-events/events. 🌻

Ave Maria Master Association

- » 5080 Annunciation Circle, #101
- » Open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

MAPLE RIDGE

From page 6

Expansion also continues in the core Maple Ridge neighborhood of garden and estate homes priced from the upper \$300,000s to mid \$500,000s. This section features lots that are 45- to 65-feet wide and 135-feet long.

Throughout the community, CC Homes offers 18 different floor plans ranging 1,133 to

4,000 square feet under air, with options for two to six bedrooms and up to three-car garages.

Each Maple Ridge home features an open concept floor plan, brick paver driveway and walkway, attached garage, rear patio or covered terrace, and Mediterranean-inspired, coastal or contemporary facade.

Built with all concrete-block construction, Maple Ridge homes are also equipped with built-in smart home technology, state-of the art appliances, contemporary upgraded European-style cabinetry, quartz or granite countertops, and



COURTESY PHOTO

The 10,000-square-foot clubhouse and community pool at Maple Ridge.

overhead recessed lighting. Additional custom options are available through CC Homes Design Studio.

The neighborhood also offers a 10,000-square-

foot clubhouse, resort-style community pool, fitness center, exercise park, dog park and additional amenities.

CC Homes is one of the largest builder-developers in Florida. The company is ranked among the Top 5 Home Builders in South and Southwest Florida by Metrostudy and the Top 100 Luxury Single-Family Home Builders in the United States by Builder.com.

The Maple Ridge Sales Center is located at 5009 Alonza Avenue. For more information, call 855-284-8913 or visit MapleRidgeFL.com. 🌻

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Songwriters Marlo and Mark perform locally but dream nationally

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

What do you get when you combine a long-time guitarist with a singing poet?
Ave Maria's own Marlo and Mark, Americana/folk songwriters who perform in the community but have their sights set on the stars.

Marlo Hower and Mark Minges met in Ave Maria when Mr. Minges, a retired businessman, hosted a talent search for a singer to join the band he was in at the time.

Ms. Hower, a retired neuromuscular therapist, hadn't sung publicly, can't play an instrument and doesn't even read music.

But they both felt an immediate musical connection that has proven successful over the past few years.

They have published 23 songs on two albums and have another 14 they are recording for a third album due out later this year.

Their first album, *Clarity*, was released in December of 2019. Their second album, *Brighter Days*, was released this past February.

In the true style of "write what you know," many of the duo's songs are based on people they know, including Ave Maria residents.

"I was at the pool one day listening to a story about how a neighbor fell in love with her husband at a Dairy Queen when she was younger," Ms. Hower said. "I told myself there was a song there." She and Mr. Minges worked together to develop the song – "Barely 17" – that Ms. Hower said is "about that person but applicable to a lot of people."

Before the pandemic curtailed public events, Marlo and Mark performed once a month on Thursdays at La Piazza in the Town Center, and for birthday and anniversary parties. They currently offer a free drive-by concert series in cul-de-sacs of Del Webb, where they both live.

"Because of COVID, we were forced to come up with our own idea for performances so we could get rehearsal time with our new material," Ms. Hower said. "It also reminds the community that we can be normal again. It brings people together in an outside setting with those who are comfortable being close but spread out with friends."

She said approximately 75 people show up for these concerts, sitting on their lawn chairs or golf carts.

"Anyone who has a spot and is willing to offer us power, we're willing to play for them," she said.

The duo performs all original songs. They said one of their most popular is "For Our Daughters and Our Sons," which has been viewed about 13,000 times on their YouTube channel.

"It's a story about the state of the world," Ms. Hower said. "We feel it's so important that we change our ways for future generations about how we look at things and how we treat one another."

In addition to their YouTube channel, Marlo and Mark's music can be found on Apple iTunes, iHeartRadio and Pandora.

Their goal, Mr. Minges said, is to have national recording artists or up-and-coming artists sing



COURTESY IMAGE

Mark and Marlo are folk songwriters who perform in our community.



COURTESY IMAGE

Brighter Days album cover.

the songs they write. They applied to play at AmericanaFest in Nashville this September and are looking into additional songwriters festivals.

Mr. Minges mentioned Kelly Clarkson, Martina McBride, Kelsea Ballerini and Kacey Musgraves as singers they consider when writing songs.

Their songwriting process starts with either Mr. Minges sending music to Ms. Hower or Ms. Hower writing lyrics that Mr. Minges then puts to music.

"Oddly enough, there have been many occasions where Mark records something in his home studio, sends it to me and it catches my attention



COURTESY IMAGE

Performing at a driveway concert

because it matches lyrics I have in my brain," Ms. Hower said.

Mr. Minges said he appreciates having Ms. Hower as a songwriting partner.

"I've written music all my life, but the hardest part for me was to write the words," he said. "All a song is is poetry set to music. I started sending her music and it just fell into place."

The duo credit Ave Maria residents with helping them be successful.

"The encouragement we received and people who came to watch us when we first started out was incredibly important for me to have the confidence doing something I never had experi-

enced doing before," Ms. Hower said. "I couldn't have done it without the support of this great community." 🌻

marloandmark.com
Drive-by concert

- » **Where:** Prosperity Lane in Del Webb
- » **When:** Sunday, July 25 from 4-5 p.m. (weather permitting)
- » **Cost:** Free

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Meet the Townmaker: Donna Marquez

BY SANDRA YEYATI

As community representative and events coordinator for Ave Maria Development, Donna Marquez wears two hats: she runs the Welcome Center located in the Town Center, which provides information to potential home buyers and visitors, and also plans the area's highly anticipated events, like the Blues, Brews and Barbecue Festival in February and the Margarita and Taco Festival in March.

"This job is perfect for me because I'm a people person. I like to talk to everyone and I love the community. When I'm organizing events, I love working with the different vendors, making sure they're all set and that everyone is enjoying themselves," she says adding that this is easily her favorite job ever, having held quieter and more isolated office positions with the Barron Collier Companies and Collier County Public Schools in previous years.

While Marquez and her husband of 23 years do not own a house in Ave Maria, they're a short drive away in Lee County. "I've lived in the same home for over 16 years, and I'm more of a country girl," she says. "Although I was born in Naples, my husband and I have deep roots in Immokalee. That's where we've grown up, gone to school and raised kids. I have a 23-year-old daughter and a 19-year-old son." Her ties to Immokalee date back generations. One of her grandmothers did bookkeeping for Immokalee farmers, while the other one owned a restaurant in town, and her grandfather opened the city's first hardware store.

The first stop for many Ave Maria visitors is the Welcome Center, where Marquez can be found year-round, along with one or more of the seven-person welcoming team. "We're here to tell people about the amenities, the different neighborhoods, what each builder is offering and how great the community is," she explains.



Donna Marquez at the Ave Maria New Home & Welcome Center

COURTESY PHHOTO

"If someone is considering living in Ave Maria, we show them a map of the community, share what each neighborhood has to offer and find out what they're interested in."

Putting her people skills to good use, Marquez asks lots of questions, listens to visitors and fine-tunes her guidance to their specific needs. "Are they looking for a 55 and up neighborhood? Are they looking to live near the school? Are they golfers? Once we understand what the buyer is looking for, we can guide them to one of the four sales centers, where they would probably have the best fit. Price range is a big factor, too," she says.

According to Marquez, most people learn about Ave Maria through word of mouth. "What I have noticed happen is people that have moved over here from the east coast are

telling their friends and family about the community, and that's bringing them over. The number one thing people are looking for is a sense of community, and they're finding that here in Ave Maria—people that care, neighbors that wave at you and look out for you. And number two is the value, the price here is incredible."

Some people that come to the Welcome Center are just tourists. "Everyone is welcome here, even if they're not looking to buy," she says. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression. You want people to feel very welcomed when they come into our office, because this community is very friendly and we reflect that."

When available, Marquez recommends the 45-minute trolley tour guided by local histo-

rian Joe Marinelli, which runs once a week in season. It's a great way to see all of the neighborhoods and learn a bit about the history of Ave Maria. On that same day, the Knights of Columbus offers free church tours, and people can also visit the Mother Teresa museum. To sweeten the deal, Marquez organizes live music at the Town Center on trolley days. "The whole day's events are free," she boasts. "When their relatives are in town visiting, a lot of residents bring them to this because not only is it free, but it's also very interesting."

In the summertime, when the Welcome Center gets fewer visitors, Marquez is still hard at work organizing events alongside her events team. "Right now in the summer, we get together and make a list of events that we're tweaking," she says. "We're thinking about adding a new event next year, but also continue with some of the events that are so popular already, including the weekly farmers' markets, two arts and crafts fairs and our two big festivals."

Marquez is quick to point out, "I have amazing volunteers that do a great job helping me. Everybody in this community comes together and makes things happen. They're just happy to help with community events."

The purpose of community events, Marquez says, is not just to bring entertainment to the community, but also to bring new people to Ave Maria. "For example, because I grew up in Immokalee, I had no desire to come out to Ave Maria. I worked at the middle school and never ventured out this way, but when I started working out here, I realized that this place is incredible. These events are bringing people that wouldn't ordinarily come to Ave Maria into the community where they can fully experience it. We've had people come up to the Blues Brews event and end up buying a home because they realized that this place is nice." 🌻




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Ave Maria Sun
Visit us online at www.AveMariaSun.com

Getting a look at our community—this summer

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

One way to experience Ave Maria’s sense of community is by frequenting the shops, nonprofits and service providers in town—whether that means getting new prescription eyeglasses, treating your granddaughter to a manicure or taking guitar lessons at a local church.

Relationships Flourish at New Neighborhood Nail Salon

For Danny Dang, Ave Nails is a dream come true. Having worked at nail salons in Minnesota since 2002, this is the first one he owns and operates. Manicures and pedicures are the main attraction at this friendly neighborhood spa that opened in March. Beauty consultant Margaret Brownell also offers facials, lash lifts and tints, eyebrow shaping and waxing services.

“We’re the only specialized nail salon in Ave Maria,” Dang says. “When someone comes in, we cut and file their nails in the shape they want, trim the cuticle, give them a hand massage and then they can pick the polish—enamel or gel. We have over 600 colors and are always getting new ones to keep up with the trends. If a client wants to have their nails longer, we put a plastic tip on the real nail, apply acrylic powder and form it into their desired shape and length.”

Dang, who lives in Ave Maria with his wife and manicurist Marie, says that his favorite aspect of the salon is the opportunity to form relationships. “During that half hour holding their hands, I get to know them by their names and listen to their stories,” he says. “The other day, a grandmother and her granddaughter had so much fun sitting next to each other and chit-chatting while getting their nails done. You’ll also see ladies from the different Ave Maria neighborhoods that don’t know each other, but they get to meet here, and I’m so thankful to see all our neighbors gather in our small salon as a community.”

Ave Nails offers monthly specials for facials and a combo manicure/pedicure for \$45. Every client receives a loyalty card; the sixth visit is 25 percent off. Open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are recommended. They’re located behind the Publix at 5052 Pope John Paul II Boulevard, Suite 110. For more information, call 239-658-5745 or email AveMariaNails@gmail.com.



Danny Dang, owner of Ave Nails, with his wife and manicurist, Maria.

Faith and Education at Fellowship Church

Founded in Immokalee, Fellowship Church has served its Southern Baptist congregation since 1916. In 2017, they opened an Ave Maria campus with Pastor Timothy Pigg at the helm. “Several church members that lived in Ave



COURTESY PHOTOS

Fellowship Church opened an Ave Maria campus led by Pastor Timothy Pigg in 2017. The church offers numerous educational and service programs including their Fellowship Academy, a kindergarten through 12th grade Bible-based home education program.

Maria asked if we would consider starting a second location, and after praying and seeking the Lord, we got clear confirmation that there was a need in the community for us to put a church there,” recalls Pigg, a Hampton Village resident. “We launched our Ave Maria campus on Super Bowl Sunday with 75 people in attendance, and that’s grown to about 115 over five years.”

The church offers numerous educational and service programs. The last week in July, they will host a church family conference with day and evening activities, mission projects and worship services, as well as a youth camp for students in grades six through 12. This August marks the third year of their Fellowship Academy, a kindergarten through 12th grade Bible-based home education program.

They also run a school of music, which features guitar, voice and piano lessons for kids and adults. Their sports ministry hosts a popular flag football league with approximately 100 participating children, and the Fellowship Counseling Center provides free individual and family counseling for grief, addiction, depression and anxiety.

To reach Southwest Florida’s diverse community, Pastor Benoit Elidor leads the Creole congregation in Immokalee, while Deacon Diego Chaparro facilitates Spanish-language Bible studies in Ave Maria. Every fifth Sunday of the month, congregants travel from the Ave Maria campus to their Immokalee location with blessing bags—a small gift of groceries and snacks for people in need.

“It’s a community family where every member is committed to each other, ultimately demonstrating the love of Christ and his love for us and how he died on the cross for our sins,” Pigg says, adding, “The mission of the church is to know God and make him known through our text-driven ministries.”

Weekly services are held 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. every Sunday at 5330 Ave Maria Boulevard. For more information, visit www.FellowshipChurch.co or call 239-657-2694.

New Optical Services Available in Town Center

Dr. Luisa Del Toro, owner of Ave Maria Optical, had a bustling business on Florida’s east coast when she took a trip to Ave Maria. After touring the area’s neighborhoods she declared to her mother, “I’m going to move



here.” Her plans solidified when she discovered that there wasn’t an optical center in town. “I sold my practice in Weston, rented this corner space in the town center, bought a house in Maple Ridge and moved to a place where nobody knew me.”

Open since last October, Ave Maria Optical offers a full menu of eye care services. “We recommend annual eye exams for everyone, especially if patients have any type of medical condition, namely hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol or macular degeneration,” says Del Toro. “We also offer LASIK consultations and referrals for things that are out of my scope of practice, like if I discover a cataract or retinal problem.”

Prescription glasses, sunglasses and contact lenses are sold on-site. With more than 30 years experience, optical manager Ralph Corcino is qualified to edge lenses in-house, reducing wait times. If patients wish to keep old frames, he often can cut lenses to fit them.

Del Toro comes from a long line of eye specialists. Her father owned an optical center for 51 years in Puerto Rico, and her uncle, cousin and sister were also opticians. “I’ve been practicing 29 years,” says the Nova Southeastern graduate. “Every day I enjoy it more, especially

when a child is nearsighted and you can fit them with glasses that allow them to see far away, or you can treat an elderly person that hasn’t been able to see for a long time, and suddenly they can reconnect with books, television or sewing,” she says. “That’s my gift that gives back.”

Ave Maria Optical is located at 5068 Annunciation Circle, Suite 108. For more information, visit AveOptical.com or call 239-658-5832. 🌟



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Luisa Del Toro, owner of Ave Maria Optical, middle, with Ave Maria Optical staff members.

AVE MARIA COMMUNITIES

SUMMER 2021

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AVALON PARK

About the Community

From the Low \$300s - \$600s

It's easy to stay active and have family fun at Avalon Park. Located within the highly sought after Collier County School District, Avalon Park attracts families looking for exceptional schools, close proximity to neighborhood parks, plenty of living space, and walkability to downtown Ave Maria. Avalon Park offers spacious homesites, unique architectural exteriors, and

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easy personalization options and versatile living spaces make everyday moments easier and more enjoyable. With a focus on quality construction and a simplified buying experience, Pulte will help you get into your new home easily, without the headaches. That's More Life Built In®, and that's exactly what you'll find at Avalon Park.



Whitestone

- Starting from the low \$400s
- 2,894 Sq. Ft.
- 4 - 5 Bedrooms
- 2.5 - 3.5 Bathrooms
- 2-Car Garage



Avalon Park at Ave Maria
4972 Seton Street, Ave Maria, FL 34142
239-842-1657



Del Webb[®] NAPLES

About the Community

From the Low \$200s - \$600s

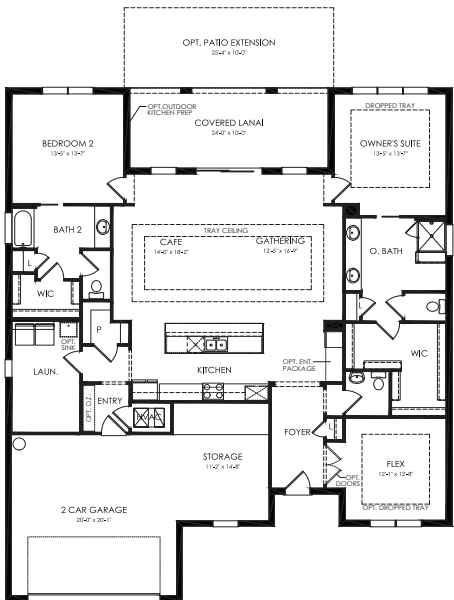
The pioneer in 55+ active-adult communities and America's leading builder of new homes for pre-retirement and retiring boomers, Del Webb brings premier resort-style amenities and a lifestyle nothing short of extraordinary to Ave Maria. Del Webb Naples has redefined retirement, boasting an optional 18 holes of pristine championship golf, 18 sports courts, resort and lap pools, a community garden, full-service, community-exclusive restaurant and bar, 2 beautiful clubhouses, and a full-time Lifestyle

Director who plans clubs, classes and events all year long. With so many ways to stay active and have fun, it's easy to see why Del Webb Naples neighbors become long-time friends. Offering 18 home designs to choose from including carriage homes, villas and single family, starting from the low \$200s to \$600s, you are sure to find a home where you can create an inspired, personalized design to fit your style, and budget. End your search for your ideal Florida oasis...it's all waiting for you at Del Webb Naples.



No one understands the importance of community like Del Webb. Del Webb communities are an extension of the homeowners who live there – a collection of passions and activities you love to enjoy with others. When you choose to build in a Del Webb 55+ active adult community, you get the benefit of more than six decades

of homebuilding experience. With homes designed for how you live, including the features that matter most to you, all backed by a warranty you can rely on, you'll feel secure now and in the future. And, a streamlined process makes it easy for you to build the home you've always wanted, in the vibrant community you've been looking for.



Stardom

- Starting from the low \$400s
- 2,269 – 2,325 Sq. Ft.
- 2 – 3 Bedrooms
- 2.5 – 3 Bathrooms
- 2 – 3-Car Garage

Del Webb Naples
6028 Victory Drive, Ave Maria, FL 34142
239-842-9643



About the Community

Maple Ridge at Ave Maria is a thoughtfully designed community with a myriad of home designs, all of which combine beautiful curb appeal with impressive interior layouts built for modern lifestyles. CC Homes is the builder behind this community and they are among the many reasons Ave Maria has become such a rapidly growing neighborhood attracting new residents from the Gulf Coast, Southeast Florida and beyond. With more than 75 years of combined experience in South Florida real estate, Mr. Armando Codina and Mr. Jim Carr along with Mr. Andres Miyares have set a new standard for quality new construction homes in desirable communities, with a wide range of pricing from entry-level to prestigious exclusivity.

CC Homes communities throughout the State of Florida have been recognized for their incredible market appeal, outstanding quality, and resident satisfaction time and time again, having built thousands of homes and residences. Homes built by CC Homes are designed to improve people's lives. Modern features, smart floor plans and upscale amenities combine for the ultimate South Florida lifestyle. Homeowners at Maple Ridge are pampered with high-end designer features included in the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.

New Contemporary Homes Available Now at Maple Ridge, Tour New Models Today!



Starting from \$340,990 to \$564,990

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Harbour

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- 3.5 to 5.5 bathrooms
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- 2 or 3-car garage

Maple Ridge
5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142
833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



About the Community

As part of the highly sought after new home community, Maple Ridge at Ave Maria-Silverwood offers exciting residential choices to buyers. Silverwood provides homeowners the perfect home at a great value. All of these single-family homes are beautifully designed with Mediterranean-inspired architecture and an inviting array of designer features included as well as some custom options available. Both Silverwood and Maple Ridge have a superb location within Ave Maria, so residents benefit from a great school district and sense of community.

Floor Plan Spotlight: The Huntington is a new construction, one-story home with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, storage, master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. Premium features included standard, such as designer brand faucets & fixtures and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and quartz countertops. A spa-like master bathroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops, a spacious shower.



Starting from \$274,990 to \$325,990

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Huntington

- Model home is now open for viewing.
- 1,630 a/c Sq. Ft.
 - 3 bedrooms
 - 2 bathrooms
 - His and her walk-in closets at master bedroom
 - 1-car garage

Maple Ridge
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THE NATIONAL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB AT AVE MARIA, FLORIDA

About the Community

Lennar is excited to bring its popular Everything's Included® homes and resort lifestyle amenities to the charm, convenience, and values of Ave Maria. The National Golf & Country Club will offer a fresh coastal aesthetic throughout the home designs and on-site amenities including an 18-hole Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, complimented by world-class amenities for the entire family to enjoy. A variety of floorplans will be offered in Terrace and Veranda Condominiums, plus Executive and Estate single family homes, starting from the upper \$100s.

The National Golf & Country Club will feature its own Clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, state-of-the-art fitness center with yoga/aerobics room, spa treatment rooms and beauty salon. Active residents can take advantage of Har-Tru tennis courts, pickle and bocce ball, putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring our community together, with spaces to congregate with friends new and old.

Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you!

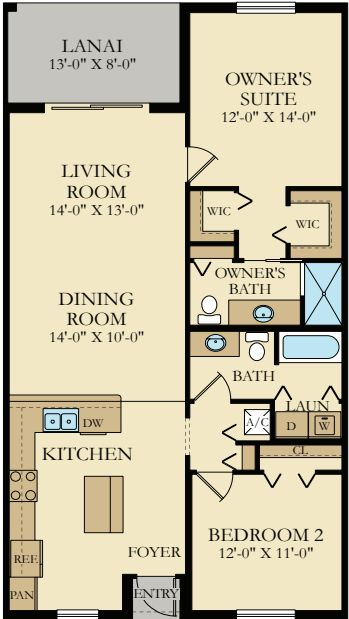


Overall starting price: from the \$200s

Lennar is one of America's leading builders of quality homes since 1954, and is one of the biggest homebuilders in Southwest Florida.

Experience unprecedented value through Lennar's Everything's Included®, simply including quality features and finishes that homeowners want and need, at no extra charge.

Simplify your home buying experience by including everything you need in a new home and community. And once you find your perfect home, our family of companies are there to assist you every step of the way with your mortgage, title and insurance needs for an enjoyable and hassle-free closing.



The Arbor

- 1,120 Sq. Ft
- 2 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- Starting at \$201,999

The National Golf & Country Club
6090 Artisan Ct. Ave Maria, FL 34142
888-214-1476 | www.TheNational-AveMaria.com



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY PHOTOS

Ave Maria University athletics department continues to blossom

BY GLENN MILLER

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

The booming Ave Maria University athletics department continues to blossom, flowering more sports and athletes.

The numbers tell part of the story. The Gyrenes will have 18 varsity and six junior varsity teams in the 2021-2022 academic year.

But the numbers tell only part of the story. The university is launching swimming and diving teams for men and women and a competitive dance team for women. The golf program is being re-launched.

All this in the wake of an academic calendar year in which Ave Maria teams excelled on fields and courts and in gyms.

“We’re hitting on all cylinder right now,” said athletic director Joe Patterson, who is also the football coach.

Nine of the then 14 teams had their best seasons ever.

“We have a lot of momentum with our program,” Mr. Patterson said.

That momentum likely helps in recruiting for swimming, diving, golf and dance.

Student-athletes are flocking from all over the country and beyond to this corner of Florida to become Gyrene student-athlete. These new teams are about the student-athletes and coaches, the people behind the numbers.

Swimmers are diving in from Michigan, Montana, Alaska, Utah and other states, golfers from New York, Ohio, California, Wisconsin and other states will soon tee off for the Gyrenes. The dance roster includes students from Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Tennessee, Ohio and New York.

Each student-athlete brings his or her own unique story. That includes swimmer Mariano Lacayo from Miami and golfers Madeline Salvador from California and Morgan Hicks from Indiana.

That also means new swim coach Riley Ceglowski from Colorado and Ave Maria alumna Juliana Buonsante to coach dance and golf coach John Klacik, a familiar name and



face around campus. He is also the football team’s offensive line coach.

■ Golf

Athletic director and football coach Joe Patterson knows Mr. Klacik well.

“Coach Klacik was an obvious choice,” Mr. Patterson said of naming him golf coach.

Mr. Klacik is a lifetime golfer, accomplished recruiter and knows the athletic program and university and what bringing golf back to the school means.

“I think golf in Southwest Florida is an obvious match,” Mr. Patterson said.

The golf team’s home course will be the National Golf & Country Club in Ave Maria.

Freshman golfer Madeline Salvador is coming from across the country to be a Gyrene. She is leaving Long Beach, Calif. behind to study and golf at Ave Maria. She said she has met Coach Klacik and is eager for her cross-continental adventure to begin.

“I can’t wait to live there a few years,” Ms. Salvador said of Ave Maria.

She feels the same way about her future teammates.

“I can’t wait to meet everyone,” Ms. Salvador said.

She loves golf for many reasons including the pace of it and that it is an individual sport and can be played at any age.

“It’s a forever sport,” Ms. Salvador said.

Incoming freshman golfer Morgan Hicks is from Fishers, Ind. Her family has vacationed in nearby Fort Myers since about the time she was in seventh or eighth grade.

The Hicks family took one trip to Ave Maria. That’s all it took. She loved the campus and golf coach John Klacik. Her parents, Brian and Stacey, were so impressed they purchased a condo in town.

Ms. Hicks said she is “really excited” to be

part of the building of the golf program. Her parents will be nearby to help her savor the experience. Morgan and her dad both golf and both sport an 8 handicap.

She is leaving behind the cold Indiana winters and looking forward to playing golf 12 months out of the year. That handicap may soon dip below 8.

Florida's mild winters and hundreds of golf courses are recruiting bonuses for the golf program.

"You can play it year round," Mr. Patterson said.

That certainly isn't the case in Indiana.

Coach Klacik is spending part of his summer recruiting. He knows recruiting golfers to come to a golfing hotbed such as Florida should not be too difficult.

Although Mr. Klacik will soon start his fourth season on the Ave Maria football staff that isn't the only sport he loves.

"I'm passionate about golf," said Mr. Klacik, who played golf as well as football at Lock Haven University, an NCAA Division II school in Pennsylvania.

Golf was officially re-launched in December of 2020 and will start competing in the upcoming school year. Mr. Klacik believes golf has a chance to be yet another successful Gyrene athletic program. The Sun Conference is competitive in golf and playing year-round on beautiful Florida courses should appeal to golfing student-athletes in cold climates.

"I don't want to just have a golf team," Mr. Klacik said. "I want to build a program we can be proud of."

That is also the goal in swimming pools as well as on golf courses.

■ Swimming

Swim coach Riley Ceglowski is coming from a place even farther away than Indiana or Pennsylvania. She previously was the head coach at NCAA Division II Adams State College in Alamosa, Col.

There isn't snow or mountains or bitter cold winters at Ave Maria. Instead, the sun shines nearly every day and it is warm 12 months out of the year.

"The weather takes some getting used to," Ms. Ceglowski said.

But whether in Colorado or Florida, the strokes and the distances are the same in competitive swimming. So is her work ethic, something that has likely made her a head coach while still in her 20s.

"You put your heart and soul into it," Ms. Ceglowski said.

She already has head coaching experience and knows what it takes to build a program. She said Ave Maria previously had a "student-led" swim club. Now, that is being transformed into an intercollegiate program.

"Every part I will have my hand in," she said.

Sophomore Mariano Lacayo was part of the swim club team but is now moving forward to be part of the varsity team.

"I will join the swim team," said Mr. Lacayo, who is from Miami.

He is looking forward to the fitness benefits from competitive swimming. He said he is cutting down on sweets as a way to prepare for intercollegiate swimming.

Ms. Ceglowski hopes to build the program from one that competes well in the Sun Conference to something more significant. The Immokalee Sports Complex is the team's home pool, about a 15-minute drive away from campus.

"Five years down the road we should be competing on a national level," Ms. Ceglowski said.

Ms. Ceglowski's official first day as an Ave Maria employee was May 1 and in her brief time on staff she has learned that she is not working alone, that swimmers and the administration are there for her.

"I have support from every single corner," Ms. Ceglowski said.

She also knows what having a swim team means for her student-athletes.

"Students are excited," Ms. Ceglowski said "It's like, 'Oh, my, God, I don't have to stop swimming.'"

Indeed not, now that Ave Maria has swim teams for men and women .

Riley Ceglowski has traveled from the



Rocky Mountains to the Florida gulf coast and knows she is now in a special place at Ave Maria University.

"It's awesome to be part of something bigger than yourself," Ms. Ceglowski said.

■ Dance

While golf and swimming are getting cranked up, Ave Maria University's dance team is preparing for its inaugural season.

Ave Maria alumna Juliana Buonsante is the

dance team's coach. The Gyrenes will become the 62nd team in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics to compete in dance. Ms. Buonsante, a 2020 Ave Maria graduate with a degree in communications, started a dance club when she was a student.

Now, the club has been elevated to a varsity sport and its coach said she is "thrilled" at the move and her new role.

As with other Ave Maria sports, the dance squad has a national flavor.

"We have students from all over," Ms.

Buonsante said.

Indeed. ...

The current roster includes three from Pennsylvania. That number may grow. Ms. Buonsante grew up in Pennsylvania and has contacts in dance studios in that state.

"I'm doing a lot of recruiting in Pennsylvania," Ms. Buonsante, 25, said.

Dance competition begins in January. Before then the dancers will perform at home football and basketball games. 🌟



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FEBRUARY 12



THE TEXAS TENORS
FEBRUARY 25



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MARCH 4



THE GUESS WHO
MARCH 19



KENNY G
APRIL 3

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FROM MORE**



ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

The following events are planned at Ave Maria. Events are subject to change. Visit AveMaria.com for more information.

The Secret Ingredient

(Open to the public)

July
Every Monday in July is **55+ and fabulous**. Anyone 55 and over will receive 10% off their favorite item.

Every Thursday in July is **Thirsty Thursday**. Shop and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine.

On July 17, Maxwell Grace, The Secret Ingredient and other local shops will be celebrating **Christmas in July** 10am – 6pm. Events include games, live music and a Christmas cookie bake-off.



August
Every Monday in August is **55+ and fabulous**. Anyone 55 and over will receive 10% off their favorite item.

Every Thursday in July is **Thirsty Thursday**. Shop and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine.

Aug. 1 is **National Girlfriends Day**. Come shopping with your girlfriends and receive 10% off your favorite item.

Aug. 21 is **National Senior Citizen day**. All senior citizens will receive 20% off their favorite item.

September
Every Monday in September is **55+ and fabulous**. Anyone 55 and over will receive 10% off their favorite item.

Every Thursday in September is **Thirsty Thursday**. Come shop and enjoy complimentary glass of wine.

September is **National Sewing Month**. Join local alterations expert Susan Minges from noon-3 p.m. on Sept. 14 at The Secret Ingredient. She will be taking items for alterations and answering questions.

Sept. 19 is **National Wife Appreciation Day**. Husbands come shopping and receive 10% off their favorite item.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Oil Well Craft Beer
(Open to the public)

July
On July 10, the **MAMBO food truck** will on site from 5-8 p.m. with prizes offered from 6-8 p.m.

On July 13, come sip on some wine, cider or beer and paint an amazing canvas with **J & J Creations4u**. The cost is \$35 and includes one drink and a 16-by-20-inch canvas. All supplies are provided.

On July 17, the famous **Chef Global** will be serving his amazing cuisine from 5-8 p.m. DJ DiFlo will be out for '70s Night from 8-11 p.m. The best '70s costume wins a prize with the winner announced at 9 p.m.

August
On Aug. 7, enjoy free bingo with prizes from 6-8 p.m. Celebrate **International Beer day** with \$1 off drafts from 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Aug. 21 is **Karaoke Night** with DJ DiFlo from 8-11 p.m.

September
Sept. 4 is **free bingo** with prizes from 6-8 p.m.

Sept. 18 is **Country Music Night** with DJ DiFlo. From 8-11 p.m. The best country attire wins a prize with the winner announced at 9 p.m.

Ave Maria University Athletics
Home games schedule
Fans are welcomed to attend in person; live streaming is also available at www.thesundigitalnetwork.com/avemariagyrenes.

Wednesday, Sept. 1
Women's Soccer – vs. Florida National Gyrene Field – 1 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 4
Women's Soccer – vs. Florida Memorial Gyrene Field – 5 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 18
Football – vs. Point (Ga.) Gyrene Field – 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 21
Women's Soccer – vs. Florida College Gyrene Field – 7 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 27
Women's Soccer – vs. Middle Georgia State Gyrene Field – 11 a.m.

The Pub
(Open to the public)

Friday Night Jazz at The Pub is set for 6-9 p.m. July 16, featuring The Ave Maria Jazz Collective.

July 24 is **National Tequila Day** with Tequila and Margarita Specials all day.



Ave Maria Dance Academy
It's not too late to register for summer dance classes and Camp Ave Maria (a recreational camp). Call 239-261-2606 for more information.

Ave General Store
(Open to the public)
Ave General Movie Night is from 7:30-9:30 p.m. July 9. Drop off kids ages 9-13 for a free movie night, free small popcorn, and pizza, hot dogs and pop on sale for the kids. Parents should register the kids and go have a date night at The Pub, Lozano's, Oil Well Brewery or Teriyaki Madness.

Ave Maria Master Association
(Residents only)
Super Science Summer Camps
Full-week science camp - July 12, 19 and 26, Monday to Friday 9-4 p.m.



Sports Camp
Two weeks - July 12, July 19 (Monday, Wednesday, Friday).

OnSpot Dermatology
Mobile clinic with screenings and various treatments.
July 9 and July 31; Aug. 16; and Sept. 8.

Dog Days of Summer Event
11 a.m.-2 p.m. July 24 at the Water Park. \$1 hot dog sale with puddles dog character and puppy craft.

Painting Party
August 11 from 3-5 p.m. hosted by Empty Bowls of Naples, in the event room.

Back to School Bash
11 a.m.-2 p.m. Aug. 14 at the Water Park. Say farewell to summer with a back to school-themed event, school items raffle, school-themed games and themed crafts.

Residents beach day out
Saturday, Aug. 21.

Labor Day Luau
11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sept. 6. This luau-themed Labor Day event features music, games, BBQ and island-themed cafe specials.

Ave Maria Town Center
(Open to the public)
Fall Festival Event hosted by The Immokalee Chamber of Commerce Saturday, September 25 from 12 to 8 p.m. More details to come. 🌻





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Local student operates successful small business

BY **EMMA BOBACK**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Ave Maria University student, Emma Boback, started her own small business two years ago with just two-hundred dollars and a few stickers. Her business, Zelig and Lou, offers stickers, apparel, and digital prints bearing quotes from saints, Latin verses, and quick facts about her Catholic faith.

The concept developed from a hobby of hand-lettering designs on notecards for friends. After a while, however, Boback wanted a more professional medium for her designs. She noticed the trend of stickers on water bottles and laptops and was drawn to the personalized nature of the stickers.

“You can tell a lot about a person from the stickers,” Boback observed. Her hope is for her products to contribute to an expression of personality and act as conversation starters.

With two-hundred dollars saved from high school graduation, during Christmas break in 2018, Boback ordered stickers of her original designs. They were more popular than she expected.

“I thought maybe a few friends would buy them,” she recalled. But they quickly sold out, and she had a hard time keeping up with demand.

That popularity has continued and has allowed Zelig and Lou to grow. Using the profits made from sticker sales, Boback expanded her products to include apparel. Her first venture into apparel was a line of sweatshirts that Boback embroidered herself using her mother’s embroidery machine. Since then, Zelig and Lou has expanded to offer t-shirts and accessories.

The company’s Instagram account represents the success of the business with over forty thousand followers from all over the world in the main age range of 18-34.

“Our generation gets so much of their information from social media,” Boback remarked.

She has harnessed the power of social media to educate others and herself about her faith. The account is an extension of the business where Boback posts informational graphics to mark saints’ feast days throughout the year. The company itself is under the patronage of husband and wife saints: Saints Zelig and Louis Martin.

Zelig and Lou has maintained a far reach.



EMMA BOBACK / COURTESY PHOTO

Emma Boback, started her own small business, Zelig and Lou, two years ago.

Boback has heard from customers across the globe and has shipped to Brazil, Poland, Ghana, and Singapore, just to name a few, and she has previously partnered with a subscription box in Canada.

Boback says she has found support in the university community and her entrepreneurial family. She has been invited by a faculty member to give

a talk to an entrepreneurship class and was a guest on the university’s podcast.

Though she entered the university intending to study Health Science, Zelig and Lou opened a lot of unexpected doors for Boback. She is now a junior at Ave Maria University studying Business and Theology. She says she has learned a lot about the legal aspects of operating a small business from her classes.

Boback balances school and business life, traveling home to Tampa every weekend to fulfill orders. For a time, she even packaged orders from her car. She recently acquired an office space in Tampa and is looking to hire an assistant over the summer.

Professionally, Boback has been asked to do freelance work for a variety of organizations and platforms including the Diocese of Arlington, the Hallow app, and Blessed Is She. In the future, Boback is looking to expand her apparel lines and branch into outsourcing to meet demand for wholesale.

For more information and to shop Zelig and Lou visit www.zeligandlou.com. The company can also be found on Instagram under the username [@zelieandlou](https://www.instagram.com/zeligandlou). 🌻

Lennar opening more models at The National Golf & Country Club

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Three model homes for The National Golf & Country Club opened this spring, and six more are scheduled to open in September. The Maria model also serves as Lennar’s Welcome Home Center.

“We’re on the first street as you come in and the last street as you leave, which is a great location for the welcome home center and models,” says Scott Schilling, area sales manager for Lennar. “People stop by after golf. It’s very convenient.”

The Maria, Victoria and Bougainvillea models that are currently open are single-family residences.

Lennar is building three Veranda models to showcase its two-story buildings with one-car attached garages as well as three Terrace models representing its 30-unit, four-story condos with carports.

Mr. Schilling noted that, until its Ave Maria models opened, the closest place for homebuyers to see these homes were the sales centers at its Babcock Ranch and Heritage Landing communities, both in Punta Gorda.

“It’s exciting to have them onsite at Ave Maria,” Mr. Schilling said.

He said the four-story condo buildings appeal to people who want a seasonal second home.

“The views are outstanding from the top two floors,” he emphasized.

The garage is a big selling point for the two-story buildings, he said.

“Ave Maria is such a golf cart community that the garage is a huge consideration for people.”

The Veranda and Terrace models feature quartz countertops in the kitchen and baths, white Shaker cabinets, stainless steel appliances, tile through-

out and carpet in bedrooms.

Some floor plans have an owner’s suite in the back while others have scenic views from the dining room and lanai.

Mr. Schilling said sales are strong, especially among people moving full time or seasonally from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and the midwest. He has also recently had buyers from California and New Mexico.

To learn more, call 888-214-1476, visit TheNational-AveMaria.com or stop by Lennar’s sales center located at 6098 Artisan Court, Ave Maria. 🌻



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The heart of this business in the heart of town is beer

BY GLENN MILLER

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Oil Well Craft Beer’s evocative name provides hints to customers venturing inside the Ave Maria brewery near the heart of town. The name also offers clues to those merely poking around on Google looking for a local brew house.

The name is a nod to nearby Oil Well Road and Collier County oil well drilling history, which dates back to 1943.

But walk inside the cool and clean and welcoming brewery and it is very much 2021, not 1943. The gleaming equipment and air conditioning and large flat-screen TVs on walls and soft rock music gently filling the room clearly says 21st century and not the middle of the 20th.

Oil Well Craft Beer is a family business, created by the husband and wife team of Ave Maria residents Matt and Danee Williams, who have been married 21 years. They were sweethearts at Bloomingdale High School in Valrico, which is near Tampa. Mr. Williams said they married “right out of high school.”

They opened Oil Well Craft Beer in January of 2017 as a taproom and in 2019 it became a brewery. It didn’t take long for beer lovers around Florida to discover the place. In mid-June the brewery’s Facebook page had 2,833 likes.

In 2019 and 2020 it was named the Florida Great American Beer Bar for the year by readers of www.craftbeer.com.

A wall was knocked down and the taproom expanded. Mr. Williams added that the wall was knocked down just before the pandemic shut down bars and restaurants. Adjustments were made as the pandemic raged.

“Stayed open in carry-out mode only,” Mr. Williams said.

Whatever the mode, one thing is a constant. Mr. and Mrs. Williams both know running a business is not a 9-to-5 proposition.

“Nine to always,” Mr. Williams said, sitting at a table just inside the front door on a warm June afternoon.

Inside it was cool. Employees pattered about preparing sandwiches and serving beer and wine. Yes, wine is also available. As are sandwiches.

But the heart of this business in the heart of town is beer.

And not beer mass-produced by a factory the size of a national park.

It is one of 18 breweries on the Southwest Florida Ale Trail, which on its website notes that is “for craft beer lovers” in Collier, Lee, Hendry and Charlotte counties. Oil Well Craft is one of those stops along with other beer havens such as Fat Point in Punta Gorda and Bonehook Brewing in Immokalee and the Fort Myers Brewing company.

Mr. Williams previously worked for federal law enforcement agencies, first with the U.S. Forest Service and then with the National Park Service. Mr. Williams spent about a year and half stationed out of Everglades City and learned a great deal about the region.

He and Danee began developing an interest in craft beers in the early 2000s as the popularity of such brewing began heating up.

An idea began percolating. Well, brewing may be a better word in this case than percolating. Open a craft brewery?

“It was something I always thought would be a great idea to do,” Mr. Williams said. “When we moved here to Ave Maria six years ago we decided this is the place we’re going to stay.”

And build their dream business. ...

At first, the place did not have a name.

“We had quite a few names we were throwing out there,” Mr. Williams said. “I



Matt and Danee Williams

COURTESY IMAGES

“It’s kind of like the town Cheers, it’s not a traditional pub but people treat it as it is.”

— Matt Williams

don’t even know if I can remember any right now.”

It was his son, Reese, 17, a recent graduate of Palmetto Ridge High School, who suggested the name Oil Well. It resonated immediately with Mr. Williams.

“I said something that it has a cool ring to it,” Mr. Williams said. “Oil. Oil Rigs.”

And oil is even an alternative name for beer in some places. Former big-league pitcher Oil Can Boyd picked up his nickname in Mississippi because he liked beer.

Even before the name, the Williamses shared a vision for their place that has now become reality.

“It’s kind of like the town Cheers,” Mr. Williams said, evoking the name of a classic sitcom whose catchphrase was where everybody knows your name. “It’s not a traditional pub but people treat it as it is.”

As he spoke, two people whose name he knows well were sitting at a nearby table. Ave Maria residents Art and Linda Kasers are regulars and retirees from Fishers, Ind.. After finishing their lunch Mr. Williams asked them to sit at his table and chat about how they ended up residing in Ave Maria and becoming Oil Well regulars.

“There is a great story behind that” Mrs. Kaser said, “It took us five years to decide where to live and we came out here when it seemed really far out to Ave.”

She found the brew pub on the Internet. “We came in here and ‘House Hunters’ on HGTV was on,” Mrs. Kaser said.

She had a glass of wine and Art had a beer. They were hooked on the town and pub and the drinks.

“Family place,” Mrs. Kaser said.

That’s something Art Kaser noticed on their first visit.

“We felt welcome from the day we walked in,” Mr. Kaser said.

How was that done? Mrs. Kaser said the staff introduced themselves and asked how they were doing.

“All that kind of stuff,” Mrs. Kaser said.

Those attention to details help make the place hum and explain why the Kasers often make the 2.1-mile trip from their home to the Oil Well.

They come to a place decorated with homages to beer culture and oil history. A Mobil gas pump stands in one corner. Growlers, large containers for beer, are



displayed on shelves by the front window. Matt and Danee thought about going for a steam-punk look initially but settled on something else.

“Kind of rustic and modern at the same time,” Mr. Williams said.

Repeat customers are likely the lifeblood of any restaurant or hotdog stand or craft brewer. Oil Well Craft Beer has repeat customers such as Ave Maria residents Dan and Laura Bordeau.

Mr. Bordeau chatted on a recent morning as they drove to Walmart for groceries. They had another stop in mind for after grocery shopping - Oil Well Craft Beer.

“Hopefully, we’ll get there for lunch,” Mr. Bordeau said.

He said they visit at least once a week for lunch and one or two nights a week for dinner, to a place where people know their names, right in the heart of town and not far from Oil Well Road. 🍷

AROUND AVE MARIA

Oil Well Craft Beer



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